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NEWPORT, R.I., SEPT. 26 (AP) - PRESIDENT KENNEDY TONIGHT WAS REPORTEDLY ON THE VERGE OF NAMING A SUCCESSOR TO ALLEN DULLES AS HEAD OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. A REPUBLICAN, JOHN A. MCCONE, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, LAST MENTIONED AS A REPLACEMENT.

IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE JOB HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH MCCONE, BUT THAT A FINAL DECISION HAD NOT BEEN REACHED LATE TONIGHT.

WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY PIERRE SALINGER SAID IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS AFTER KENNEDY ARRIVED HERE FOR A WEEK'S VACATION THAT HE (SALINGER) WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SIGNIFICANT VISIT TO KENNEDY TOMORROW ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS. THERE WAS SPECULATION THAT A CIA APPOINTMENT IS IMMINENT AND THE SUCCESSOR TO DULLES MAY BE INTRODUCED BY KENNEDY AT NEWPORT TOMORROW OR LATER IN THE WEEK.

DULLES SAID LAST YEAR, AFTER KENNEDY ASKED HIM TO REMAIN ON THE JOB, THAT HE PLANNED TO RETIRE BY THE END OF 1961.

THE C.I.A. CAME UNDER FIRE AFTER THE ILL-FATED CUBAN INVASION EARLIER THIS YEAR, BUT KENNEDY NEVER SINGLED OUT DULLES FOR ANY BLAME. THE C.I.A. WAS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE HAD A HAND IN TRAINING THE CUBAN EXILES WHO MOUNTED THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW FIDEL CASTRO.

MCCONE, 59, HEADED THE AEC FROM 1958 TO JANUARY 1961 UNDER PRESIDENT EISENHOWER. HE RESIGNED VOLUNTARILY WHEN THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION TOOK OVER SO THE NEW PRESIDENT COULD HAVE A MAN OF HIS OWN PICKING IN THE POST.

DURING THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION MCCONE SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE AIR POLICY COMMISSION, AND FROM JUNE 1950 TO OCTOBER 1951 HE WAS UNDER SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE.

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